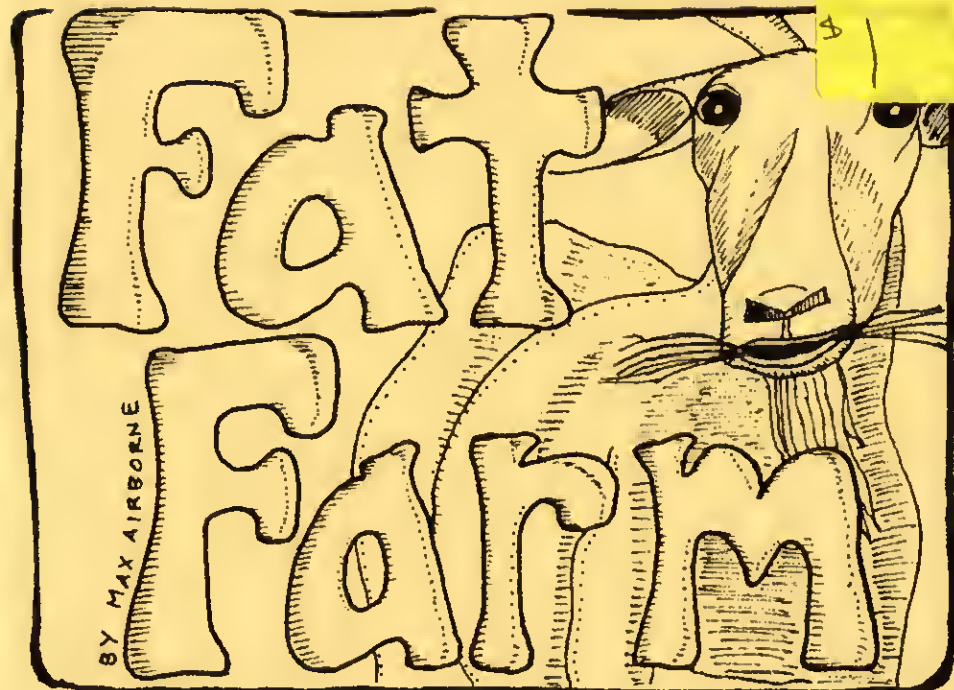




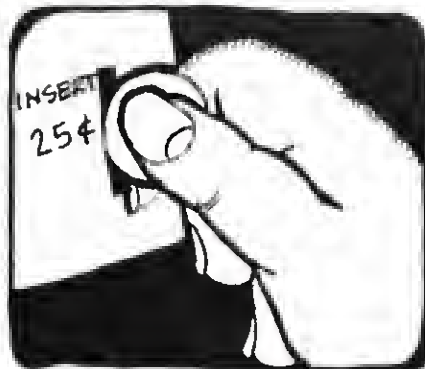
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PRICE

\$

1



CLINK

She slipped
the quarter
into the
machine.

With a metallic THUD,
out dropped the thing
that, in this place,
felt like
my only
LUXURY.



"Your hands look thinner. I can see the weight coming off."



What?! I'd spent the weekend frantically transcribing song lyrics I wanted to learn, into the wee hours until my hands ached,



Now, it was no secret that the bribe was mine. She'd seen me slam the door, and she'd seen me in a door-slamming mood before.

The Tab was my implied agreement not to go there.





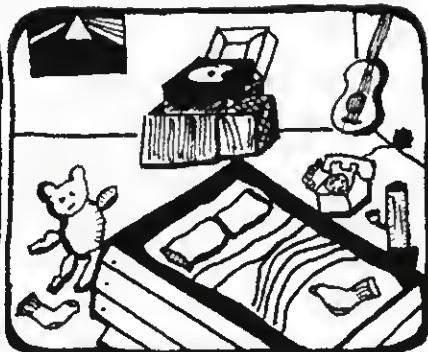
"Buy me a
Tab?"

I asked her, with a
pathetic look on my face.

I knew she would. It
was how she got me
out of bed in the
morning, her bribe,
a cold can of Tab
from the machine.



so **STIFF** I couldn't
drop the pen. I'd been
at my mom's on a weekend
pass, revelling in luxuries
like record players, my
well-loved record collection,
my waterbed with rainbow
sheets.



"What!?!?" I asked, incredulous.



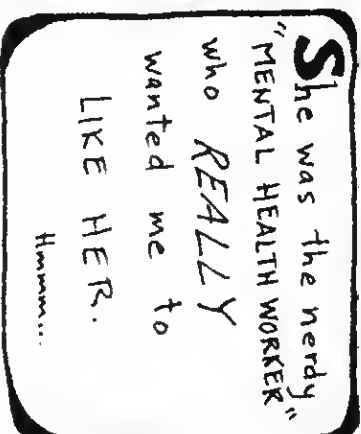
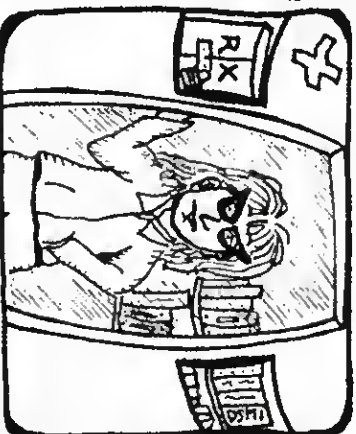
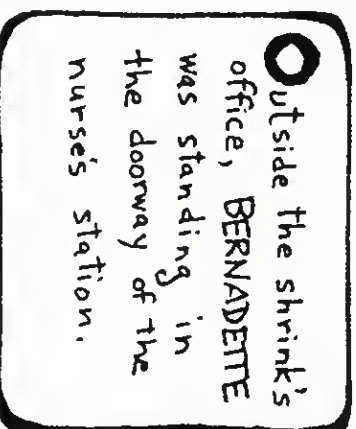
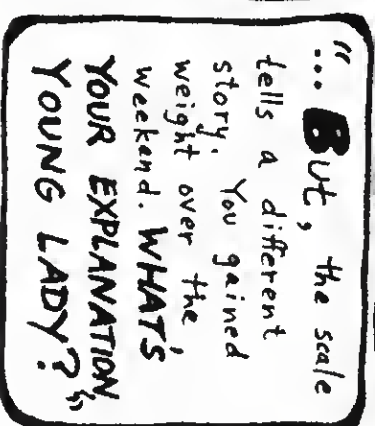
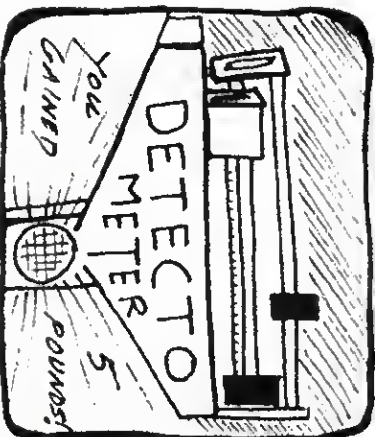
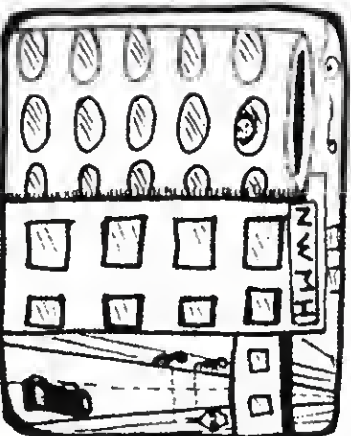
"Your hands. They're looking
nice. They're getting thin."

The doctor's comment took
me by surprise.

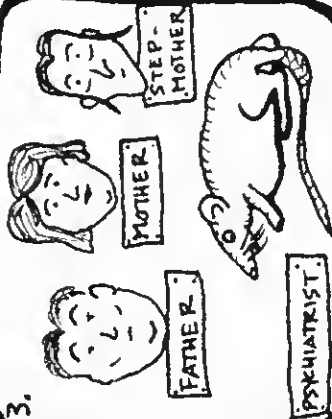
I HATED HIM.

Yet... in his twisted
way he was expressing
pride in me, and I wanted
it, which pissed me off.

@*!~ 4?!@*?!*!@?!



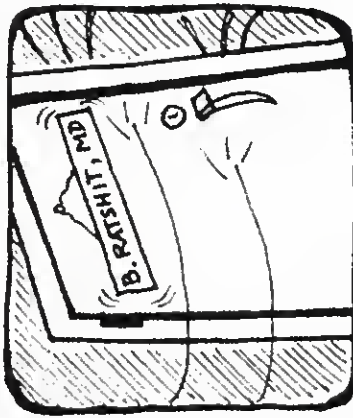
3.



4. Kept me locked up and starving because they thought it would save me, because they could. Because I was 13.

"FINE!"

I left and slammed the door behind me.



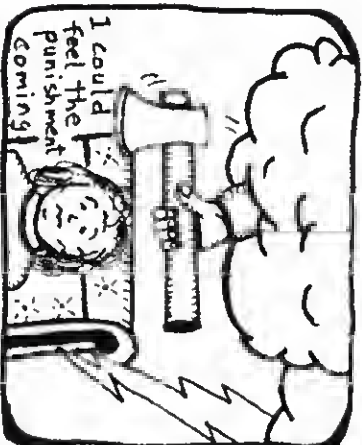
"I don't know."



MY SHRINK.

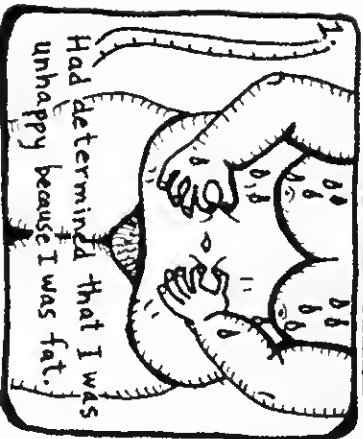
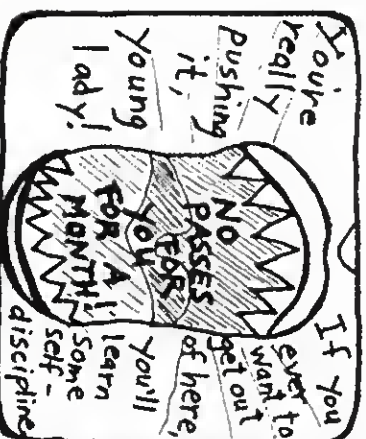
He was so uptight you had to wonder if he ever took a dump. He was always hyper, authoritarian, and on the brink of being pissed off. **THERE WAS NO LOVE IN THIS LITTLE MAN.**

"LISTEN YOUNGLADY! 'I DON'T KNOW' is NOT a sufficient answer. I KNOW YOU'RE LYING! WHY DID YOU GAIN FIVE POUNDS OVER THE WEEKEND?"



You see, I was on a diet. I was allowed 500 calories a day. Every privilege I had was contingent on the numbers revealed by the scale. The funny thing was, those numbers didn't always reflect what I had eaten.

This weekend, however, I had been drinking. **AND HE KNEW,** he knew something. Bored with the game, knowing I'd lost, **I CONFESSED.**



They:

